The REFUGEES

By A. CONAN DOYLE, Author of "The Return of Sherlock Holmes"

"It is not possible that it should be chance," said the American gravely, swinging himself off his horse. "Why, what is this? My other leather is cut."

"And so is mine. I can feel it when I pass my hand along. Have you a tinder box? Let us strike a light."

"No, no; the man who is in the dark is in safety. I let my enemy strike lights."

"My rein is cut also."

"And so is mine."

"And the girth of my saddle."

"It is a wonder that we came so far with whole bones. Now, who has played us this little trick?"

"Who could it be but that rogue Jaques? He has had the horses in his charge. By my faith, he shall know what the strappado means when I see Versailles again!"

"But why should he do it?"

"Ah, he has been set on to it. He has been a tool in the hands of those who wished to hinder our journey."

"Very like. But they must have had some reason behind. They knew well that to cut our straps would not prevent us from reaching Paris, since we could ride bareback or, for that matter, could run it if need be."

"They hoped to break our necks."

"One neck they might break, but scarce those of two. They could not have thought to stop us. What did they mean, then? They could only have meant to delay us. And why should they wish to delay us?"

"For heaven's sake"— broke in De Catinat impetuously.

"Why should they wish to delay us, then? There's only one reason that I can see—in order to give other folk time to get in front of us and stop us. That is it, captain. I'd lay you a beaver skin to a rabbit pelt that I'm on the track. There's been a party of a dozen horsemen along this ground since the dew began to fall. If we were delayed they would have time to form their plans before we came."

"By my faith, you may be right," said De Catinat thoughtfully. "What would you propose?"

"That we ride back, and go by some less direct way."

"It is impossible. We should have to ride back to the Meudon crossroads, and then it would add ten miles to our journey. We are surely not to be turned from our path by a mere guess. There is the St. Germain crossroad about a mile below. When we reach it we can strike to the right along the south side of the river and so change our course."

They mounted and rode on. Suddenly De Catinat's eye caught something in the gloom which brought a smile to his face. Away in front of them, between two dark tree clumps, lay a vast number of shimmering, glittering yellow points, as thick as flowers in a garden. They were the lights of Paris.

"See!" he cried, pointing. "There is the city, and close here must be the St. Germain road. We shall take it, so as to avoid any danger."

"Very good! But I should not ride too fast, when your girth may break at any moment."

"Nay, come on. We are close to our journey's end. The St. Germain road opens just round this corner, and then we shall see our way, for the lights will guide us."

He cut his horse with his whip, and the two galloped together round the curve. Next instant they were both down in one wild heap of tossing heads and struggling hoofs, De Catinat partly covered by his horse, and his comrade hurled twenty paces, where he lay silent and motionless in the center of the road.

M. de Vivonne had laid his ambuscade with discretion. With a closed carriage and a band of chosen ruffians he had left the palace a good half hour before the king's messengers. On reaching the branch road he had ordered the coachman to drive some little distance along it and had tethered all the horses to a fence under his charge. He had then stationed one of the band as a sentinel some distance up the main highway to flash a light when the two couriers were approaching. A stout cord had been fastened eighteen inches from the ground to the trunk of a wayside sapling, and on receiving the signal the other end was tied to a gatepost upon the farther side. The two cavaliers could not possibly see it, coming as it did at the very curve of the road, and as a consequence their horses fell heavily to the ground and brought them down with them. In an instant the dozen ruffians, who had lurked in the shadow of the trees, sprang out upon them, sword in hand, but there was no movement from either of their victims.

M. de Vivonne lit a lantern and flashed it upon the faces of the two unconscious men. "This is bad business, Major Despard," said he to the man next him. "I believe that they are both gone."

"Tut, tut! By my soul, men did not die like that when I was young!" answered the other, leaning forward his fierce, grizzled face into the light of the lantern. "Pass your rapier under the third rib of the horses, De la Touche. They will never be fit to set hoof to ground again."

Two sobbing gasps and the thud of their straining necks falling back to earth told that the two steeds had come to the end of their troubles.

"Where is Achille Latour?" asked De Vivonne. "He has studied medicine at Montpellier."

"Here I am, your excellency. It is not for me to boast, but I am as handy a man with a lancet as with a rapier. Which would you have me look to?"

"This one in the road."

(To be Continued.)

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UNFRIENDLY IS THIS ESTIMATE

But Roosevelt Does Not Prove Up Strong

Why Small People Can Not Appreciate His Strength of Resistance.

GOD'S GOOD TO THE PRESIDENT

Washington, Dec. 20.—The gods are good to the president. They turn all things and all people to his favor. They even calm the hysteria of the imperfect and lure the sagacious on with blue-eyed smiles. He has the happy art, this chieftian (or is it gift?) of divining the people's will, even before the country is quite sure of its own conclusions. There is a psychic something about him which enables him to know the workings of the great popular mind before the aspirations seething in it have found tongue. He alone walks in the sun, and leaves the politicians groping in the gloom of yester night. He is close to the great heart.

A year ago when the Fifty-ninth congress came in the thoughts of the nation's legislators were torn with doubt. There was rebellion, open and concealed, against this Masterful Man. The big majority in the house was too big, and some of it thought it would tell the president the time of day. The senate, too, had its fond way of administering corrections. But how he overcame the opposition—he and circumstances. They who had come to curse remained to pray, all except a brace of the robustious. And now, "it is as you please, sir," and "What is your wish, Mr. President?"

There has been an election, you see, and the many have upheld the one. Wherever the president's influence was put forth in a state down went the candidate whom he opposed, whether of his own party or the other. The obtusest congressman can read such a sign as that. And one by one the old warhorses drop to the rear with their ancient loads of bygone policies.

A senator who held out long in opposition last session, and who made a great point of criticising the president for his "interference," for his "domination of congress," said to me: "Of course one has to criticise that sort of thing; but after all, the president does just what I did when I was governor of my state. I used to tell the members of the legislature what I wanted, and I usually carried my point." The senator might have added that as governor he had a more cajoleful way with the legislators than the president has with congressmen. The president is a man-driver and a wielder of sledge hammers. But the senator's confession is illuminating. It always make a difference whose ox is gored. President Roosevelt's predecessor did not gore oxen. He was soothful. President McKinley was happiest in placating. He liked to please everybody President Roosevelt bends his energies to the successful issue of his own policies. He cares not who is displeased so long as he "has the country with him." He knows he has it.

Has Great Resistance.

The pressure of influence upon a president is tremendous and unceasing. The force and volumes of it can probably never be realized by the general public. Whatever a president does has to be done against pressure. President Roosevelt has an enormous capacity for resistance. He enjoys resistance, even when he becomes impatient with the resisters It's the swing and flow of his own capacity that he likes to feel. He has a boy's ardor, an actor's love for the center of the stage, and he has an unrivalled genius for getting at the heart and the thought of the great public. His critics testify to this. They say: "It dosn't matter what Roosevelt says or does, the public will believe him and sustain him." Put it in another way, and you have it. He knows what the public wants. That is because he touches life on so many sides. He is informed of the thought of the world in this present time. Most of our men in political life are not so informed. They do not dare to cross the three-mile limit. It is his pleasure to do so. They subsist chiefly on the records of their party; he, always a partisan, knows that the world moves and that old policies are often ill-fitted to these times. Men who are governed by their prejudices do not guide him. But he will use them.

Most presidents have seen states. President Roosevelt sees the nation. State sovereignty does not fit in with his ideals. This fact may horrify many worthy minds, but the president is not alone in his views. It would surprise us all if we could poll an opinion of the voters on the subject of the states and their probable future relation to the federal government, say fifty years hence. Modern communication devours state boundaries. Nowadays we pass from state to state as easily as we pass into the next street. It's a small business which is not transacted in many states. San Francisco today is nearer Washington than Boston was a hundred years ago. Every year the people take strength from the states and give it to the national government. The appeals now are not so much to the state capitals as the national capital. For practical purposes it matters little in what state a man now lives, has liberty and pursues happiness. Hundreds of thousands of men live in one state and earn their incomes in another. Industry and commerce regard states as geographical expressions. All of us live by some sort of industry or commerce, and there is little more significance now in going from Massachusetts to Ohio, except the fare, than in going from Suffolk county into Essex. The thoughts of statehood do not grow nowadays; certainly the ideals do not.

But the thought of nationhood does grow, and its ideals fix themselves in the minds of all men. Whether we like it or dislike it, the supremacy of the national idea is shaping our politics, guiding congresses, inspiring the administration. It is not likely to cease in growth. It means centralization, of course. But our modern way of life is forcing that. It is not the president, nor any man; it is not a party, nor a propaganda, but every tendency of modern life which strengthens the powers of the national government, and which brings to it new duties. This stream of tendency is encountered everywhere. President Roosevelt sails gayly on it. His opponents sit on the banks and bewail the speed at which he travels; they do not see the flood which carries him along.

Old Earth Still Spins.

Many have been the changes of a year. A little year, ere yet the Fifty-ninth congress was a month old, why he, even he of the vast majority, faced insurrection at his capital. And in the country, too, there were murmurs and mutterings and some downpours of wrath. Now we can see that they were showers and squalls, not storms. The skipper of the craft held on his course and read the weather better than his critics did. The country is still intact. Those terrible measures were not so terrible after all. The sun is in its place, the stars swing in their coures and this merry old earth spins just as it ever did in space.

Popularity? Oh, well, the prophets were wrong. Even simplified spelling has not altered it. The president's popularity is as great as ever, so far as Sam Weller's patent double-million microscope might reveal anything to the contrary. Popularity? Well, peace be with it!

There are some men whose souls are unwrung because other men are popular. Their brains warp and sag. Now you know, and I know, that nobody else can be so good, and wise, and courageous, and disinterested, as you are, and as I am. For that reason we should have lenient souls, and patiently, tolerantly, reckon with the rest of the world. Why haven't we, and why don't we? Because we are gravelled for lack of generosity and imagination. There are men of virtue and narrowness, brains and prejudices, who, seeing the popularity of a man, conceive an instant fear of him, and whip it with a green spray of jealousy. They would like to block the path of the popular man, pull down that favored one, and dash the little, broken pieces of him among the devouring dogs of wreckage and oblivion. Dear, doubting, pessimistic creatures! They are good Christian folk, and say their prayers; eminent citizens to whom, some day, we shall erect tablets and stained-glass windows, but another man's popularity shrivels 'em and they get a sort of mental blind-staggers. Few of us in this world are wholly immune. But most of us can strengthen our intelligent muscles, and put our generosity in the sunshine to grow, and cultivate imagination. If we can't, and don't nature has small use for us. The world moves by and leaves us marking time.

Narrow Folk Can't Grasp Him.

I've heard men say, men who know their world and who have a broad outlook on it, that the more they saw of, probed into and understood the opposition to President Roosevelt, the more they were drawn toward him—in spite of traits, characteristics in him, that they didn't like. That, in the words of Socrates, is about the size of it. This man takes a lot of understanding. Narrow folk can't grasp him, and they see only the shadow of him as the sun rises. If you want to know the mountain in its relation to the landscape, get away from it and don't look through the big end of a telescope. Over in Europe they have a bigger, broader view of President Roosevelt than we have at home, than anybody has at Washington. We are too near the mountain. They see the mass in its relation to the rest of the human movement. We see the votes and the bills bfore congress.

The headmasterr of Eton did not exaggerate when, at the American Thanksgiving dinner in London, he said that President Roosevelt is greatly esteemed and warmly praised as a leader of men. American politics they may not care for, they may not understand but they know a man, and his relation to things they can perceive quickly enough. If President Roosevelt were to visit Europe during the summer of 1907 he would have a reception which, for genuine appreciation and enthusiasm, would far exceed any welcome accorded to any traveler in the old world for a hundred years.

And why shouldn't he go? The heads of other governments go where they choose, and when they choose, when duty permits. Why may it not be the duty of the president of the United States to visit Europe during his term of office. The president of France goes to St. Petersburg and London, the German emperor goes to Constantinople and Jerusalem and Rome; the king of England visits every capital on the continent. France Germany and England are none the worse for these occasional excursions. Cannot we Americans dwell in peace and sanity for a couple of months while our presidents get into personal touch with the people and governments of other lands? Or must we confess that one man is so essential to our scheme of things that we cannot spare him for sixty days?

Of course there are many patriots who would howl. But they would soon recover from their hysteria. And then again, it would cost no more for a naval squadron to convoy the president to Europe than it costs to maneuver anywhere else. Europe might learn something; the president surely would; and the rest of us could if we chose. Shattered traditions? Oh, yes. Once there was a tradition that the earth is flat and supported by vast columns which had their bases on thin air. That tradition was shattered several centuries ago. Nobody that I meet is the worse for its destruction.

The three-mile limit does not bound all the law and gospel and the forces of nature. It has its political uses, but there are others. All of us have our three-mile limits. It will do us good to navigate across them once in a while and look around a little at the world of ideas which flourishes and shines in spite of us. Out in California they have three-mile limits on their understandings. They prattle of "education, progress and enlightenment," and then shiver with fright over the Japanese question and set up the state as a "bigger man" than Uncle Sam. Education is a wonderful thing. Some people think they get it out of books and by the favor of school committees.

POETICAL LEGS HAD THIS BEAUTY

Sylvia Gerrish Dies On Morris Heights

Her Smile Once Enchanted Thousands of People in Metropolis During Reign.

STORIES ABOUT HER CAREER

A woman's life—a life which had drunk to the lees all that this old earth's cup holds of pleasure and bitterness—went out last Saturday night in the bleak house on Morris Heights, which with a decade's neglect and ruin upon it, is still called "the Hilton mansion." It was Sylvia Gerrish who died there—the Sylvia Gerrish whose smiles enchanted thousands. She died alone, without a hand near to ease her going or a lip to whisper a good-bye word.

It was August, a year ago, in the same bare room where the woman's life ended, that Henry Graham Hilton, who sacrificed everything that he had in the world for Sylvia Gerrish, breathed his last. Death found him a wreck as it found her.

It seems but a few years since Sylvia Gerrish flashed out of the west and set the gilded youth of the town agape by her beauty. But the years count seventeen when the pages are turned back. The season of 1889 ushered Sylvia Gerrish down to the footlights of the old Casino as Adolph da Valladalid in "The Brigands." She spoke not a line; simply smiled at the front row and boxes, bent her dimpled knees a couple of times and went up stage again. Yet in the morning she was famous. The critics described her as "the girl with the poetical legs." And those legs of hers suddenly danced her to the heights of a star, with the managers of New York and London bidding to win her to them.

Henry Graham Hilton was in the front row of the Casino the first night that Sylvia Gerrish looked over its footlights. He was then at the beginning of a commercial career, whose course was laid along a golden route. Son of Judge Hilton, the executor of the A. T. Stewart estate, with his father's position and influence and riches behind him, there was nothing to stay him. He had been married eight years before to a beautiful girl, Agnes Sanxay.

Henry Hilton's wedding present was his installation as the head of the wholesale dry goods firm of Hilton, Hughes & Co.

So young Hilton was the night of Sylvia Gerrish's debut. He was called one of the handsomest men in town. He stood six feet two or three inches, and was built like a gladiator. Few men were his match in strength.

Soon after that no night went by but the gay restaurants of the theater district saw young Hilton and Sylvia Gerrish together, their names and their association became by-words. Sometimes Fred Hilton, younger brother of Henry, and Delia Fox made a quartet at midnight suppers.

The summer after Hilton met Sylvia Gerrish his father mortgaged the Stewart building to Hetty Green for $1,250,000 to pay for the son's extravagance, and Henry Hilton passed out of the firm of Hilton, Hughes & Co. Sylvia advised him to refuse settlement of $25,000, and there followed a tangle of law.

The scandal of it all helped to break Judge Hilton's heart. It broke Mrs. Hilton's, although she bore up under the disgrace until 1901, when she died in Paris.

There came a break after four years—a break that it was thought would keep Hilton and Sylvia Gerrish apart forever. She went to London, and there she secured perhaps her greatest success in "Nitouche." Her poetical limbs played havoc with the English Johnnies, and she sent word back to New York that she would never return. But she did. Delia Fox crossed the ocean with a truce from Hilton, and the two returned together in the summer of 1893.

The old life of the pair began anew and Gerrish was more notable in her beauty than ever. Her trip abroad had given her a new lease on her good looks. Hardly had she settled down when she was taken ill at the Hotel Marlborough, and the progress of her illness was part of the day's news. Nobody but Hilton and her doctors saw her.

Judge Hilton set his soul on breaking the attachment of his son, but it was of no use.

Sylvia Gerrish wore only a No. 1 boot and the year the Thistle came across the Atlantic to "lift the cup" one of those slips of leather was nailed to the cutter's mast for a talisman. Watson drank the full of it in champagne, and for the slipper gave its owner the insignia of the Royal Yacht Squadron.

In March 1901 Henry Hilton married Sylvia Gerrish, a few days after the death of the first Mrs. Hilton. They went to live in the mansion his father had built on Morris Heights. When the judge died in 1899 he had cut his son off with $25,000, but the executors compromised, and Hilton and the actress got enough to have kept them in luxury. It went to the winds. Hilton died "broke." His wife found a note among his effects on which she realized, it is understood, $5,000. This kept her going until a few months ago. Her credit was gone long before. The fine old home had been stripped of all its treasures. In October last it was sold with its gardens, under the hammer. She and her brother, George Rollins, could not have lived there much longer.

George Rollins, the brother, who had lived with Sylvia Gerrish for years, ran out of the house Saturday night to get a doctor. When he returned his sister was dead. The physician he summoned said heart disease had killed her and he saw not a trace of beauty in her face or form.

It was forty-eight years ago that Sylvia Gerrish was born in the little mining comp of Big Oak Flat, in Calaveras county, Cal. Sylvia Gerrish was her mother's maiden name. Her name was Sylvia Rollins.—New York World.

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